

Proclamation 7983—Irish-American Heritage Month, 2006

February 24, 2006

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The histories of Ireland and the United States are deeply intertwined. For generations, the sons and daughters of Ireland have come to America with a spirit of determination and optimism that has strengthened our Nation's character and enriched our history. During Irish-American Heritage Month, we celebrate Irish Americans and the significant contributions they have made to our Nation.

During the Great Potato Famine of the 19th century, approximately 1 million Irish came to America. And over the last 150 years, millions more have come from Ireland to the United States. In this country, Irish Americans have ably served in their communities, in the government, and in the Armed Forces. They have achieved great success in all walks of life. Actress Grace Kelly entertained us and influenced our culture; industrialist Henry Ford transformed factory production and transportation; and President Ronald Reagan dedicated himself to the spread of peace, liberty, and democracy, helping to change our country and the world.

This month, we recognize the proud history and many accomplishments of Irish Americans. Our Nation is grateful for the role they have played in defending and renewing the ideals that we cherish. Their hard work, firm values, and strong faith have made our Nation a better place.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 2006 as Irish-American Heritage Month. I call upon all Americans to observe this month by celebrating the contributions of Irish Americans to our Nation.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fourth day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand six, and of the Independence of the United

States of America the two hundred and thirtieth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., February 28, 2006]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on March 1. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Interview With Doordarshan of India

February 24, 2006

India-U.S. Relations

Q. Well, Mr. President, how is your strategy partnership with India is going to shape up during the forthcoming visit?

The President. Well, first of all, our strategic partnership had a great start, or a great impetus, when your Prime Minister came to visit here in Washington. We had a wonderful visit. And one of the important things about diplomacy is to get to know your counterpart. And I got to know the Prime Minister and admire him as really a decent fellow who is smart and capable.

And this visit will help foster not only the personal relationship, though, but a strategic partnership that is growing all the time. And it's one that is very important for the American people, and I think, the people of India. This relationship between the United States and India can produce good results for our people but also will enable us to achieve some international objectives as well.

Civilian Nuclear Power Program in India

Q. Well, in the context of excellent bilateral relations, which you have just mentioned, I think, what's your take on the civilian nuclear program?

The President. Well, it's a tough issue. It's a tough issue for the Prime Minister; I understand that, and it's a tough issue for me. I knew it was going to be a hard issue, because we have to convince—both of us have to convince our respective people it's in the interest to have a civilian nuclear program supported by the United States and India, as well as a civilian nuclear program

that's separate from a military program in India.

And I understood the politics was going to be difficult, and there's still work to be done. We've just got to continue to come up with an agreement that both of us can live with. But the relationship is broader than just the civilian nuclear issue. I've told the American people, we want India to develop a civilian nuclear power program. We're all, kind of, connected globally, particularly when it comes to the price of energy. And the more nuclear power used by great emerging democracies and economies like India, the better off we'll all be.

Q. Well, there's an impression, as reflected in the U.S. media, that you are surrendering your interests while proposing to supply civilian nuclear technology to India. What do you tell them?

The President. Well, I tell them it's in the interests of the world that India have a nuclear power industry. On the other hand, it's also very important for India to understand our concerns about making sure that there's a—that a civilian program is separate from the military, and there's the IAEA safeguards. And again, we're breaking some new ground. I'm not surprised that it's difficult to reach a consensus. And we'll keep trying and working at it.

The key thing is, though, that the people of India understand that our relationship is a vital relationship. And it's vital on a variety of fronts. It's vital when it comes to commerce and trade and prosperity; it's vital on fighting the war on terror. I mean, the people of India know what terror is all about—you've been hit before. And it's vital on working together to achieve a more peaceful world. And so I'm really looking forward to this trip. It's going to be exciting for us.

War on Terror

Q. I think the—terrorism is one area—a joint working group has been working excellently, even before the unfortunate incident of 9/11, between India and U.S. But the terrorist training camps and training infrastructure in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir has not been totally dismantled. How about a—and from the Pak-Afghan border, sir, also,

troops are being—your troops are being targeted. So how—

The President. Well, listen, I understand the war on terror is universal, and it's very important for all of us to work together to stop the advance and the goals of these terrorists. And you bring up Pakistan—it's an interesting moment in our relationships with each other. It used to be that if America were close to Pakistan, then the Indian Government—

Q. Yes, that zero-sum game, that is over.

The President. It was zero-sum. And now I think President Musharraf understands that it's important for me to have a good relationship with India and vice versa. Prime Minister Singh understands. And we do have a good relationship with both. But on my trip to Pakistan, I will of course talk about the terrorist activities, the need to dismantle terrorist training camps, and to protect innocent life, because one of the real dangers of the terrorist movement is that they'll kill innocent people to achieve an objective. And India and President Musharraf, as well as our country, cares deeply about innocent life. We respect human life.

Trade With India

Q. Now about trade and commerce, which we are mentioning. Well, in your Asia Society speech—I attended; I heard it, was a spectacular speech you made.

The President. Thank you.

Q. So you talked about this Indian middle class, the 300 million, which is bigger than U.S.

The President. It is.

Q. Growing, emerging market and all that. But still India right now contributes only 1.3 percent of your global export.

The President. Right.

Q. So what's the roadmap?

The President. Well, the roadmap is to continue to work for openness, opening markets on both sides. Listen, trade, again, this is an issue that takes time to develop. Our relationship is a growing relationship, and we're constantly addressing needs to make sure that markets are open. We are going to have a business CEO forum with India CEOs and American CEOs that will brief us on what more we can do together.

And we're democracies. I mean, India is a great democracy. And democracies, there's constant pressure against certain advances. People have their opinion, and people are allowed to express their opinion. And opening markets is difficult. It's difficult for a lot of countries, and it's not easy for America, either. But the purpose of the trip is to continue to work to open up markets, because opening markets and free trade that's fair trade will benefit workers and families on both sides of the trading equation.

India-U.S. Relations

Q. Well, military-to-military relationship is again another success story, new heights. It is every day it is reaching new heights.

The President. Yes.

Q. Marrying of technologies and understanding each other—and what about the same kind of cooperation in the field of defense industry?

The President. In what now?

Q. In defense industry, joint production with India, America, technology transfer.

The President. Well, as you know, there's a lot of technology transfer. And I quoted the example of Texas Instruments having a plant in India's silicon valley, a research center, and that's a classic case of technological transfer. Knowledge is technology, is the advancement of technology. And listen, this country has greatly benefited by Indian Americans, and Indians that have—with advanced degrees and degrees that have—unbelievably smart—engineering and different aspects of science and technology. And we welcome the presence of Indian students here in America, as well as the great contribution of our Indian Americans.

But technology transfers oftentimes require knowledge transfers, and one of the things about the relationship that has emerged is the fact there's a lot of knowledge transfer between private sectors and through research institutions, and that's positive.

President's Upcoming Visit to India

Q. Well, the last question. This is your first visit to India.

The President. It is.

Q. While preparing to visit India and political negotiations, have you discussed with

Mrs. Bush how to negotiate hot Indian curry? [Laughter]

The President. Well, I'm going to have to—I'll have to try that on. I'll tell you afterwards. My one regret is that I'm not going to go see the Taj Mahal. And that's not the fault of the Indian Government; that's the fault of the George W. Bush schedulers. And obviously, it goes to show sometimes the President doesn't get all his wishes.

But I am really looking forward to going to the country. I am looking forward to meeting members of the Government. I'm looking forward to having private time with the Prime Minister. And I know Laura joins me in telling the Indian people, thanks for friendship, and we can't wait to come to your country.

Q. Thank you very much. And welcome to India, you and Mrs. Bush. And I think there will be many more visits after this.

The President. I hope so. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 11:18 a.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast and was embargoed by the Office of the Press Secretary until 9:00 p.m. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India; and President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Interview With Pakistan Television

February 24, 2006

Pakistan-U.S. Relations

Q. Mr. President, you are paying a visit to Pakistan at a very crucial juncture, at a time when changes are being experienced in the region. And people of Pakistan are pinning a lot of hope on your visit because they think many problems are there and your visit will play a very vital role in it. So what is your vision for making this trip more meaningful and productive?

The President. The first thing that's really important for people to understand is that relations between our countries oftentimes depend on the relations between the leaders. In other words, President Musharraf and I can set a tone for the relationship because